RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

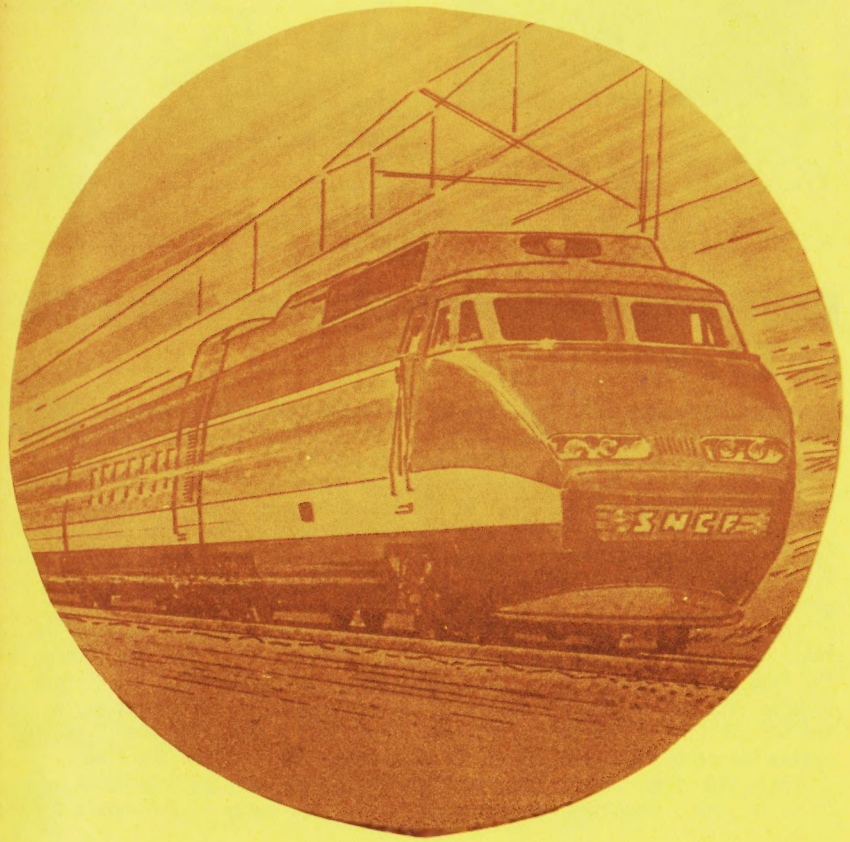
80¢

VOL. 13 NO. 9

MAY 1983

ISSUE NO. 267

(R) 6-1-83



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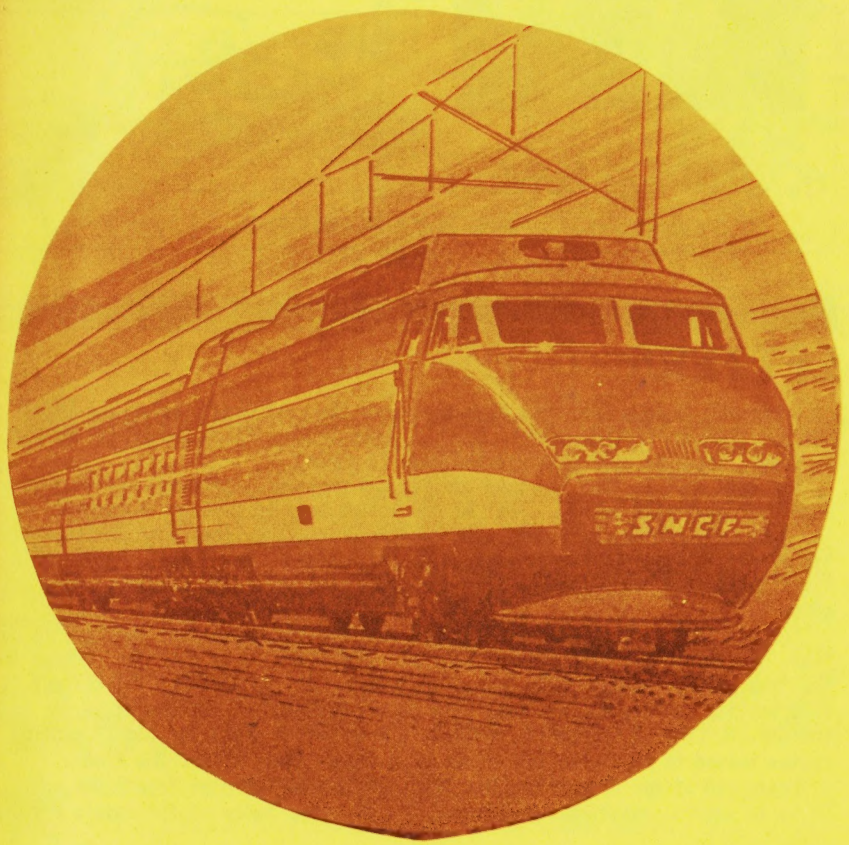

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Amtrak award

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(continued on page 22)

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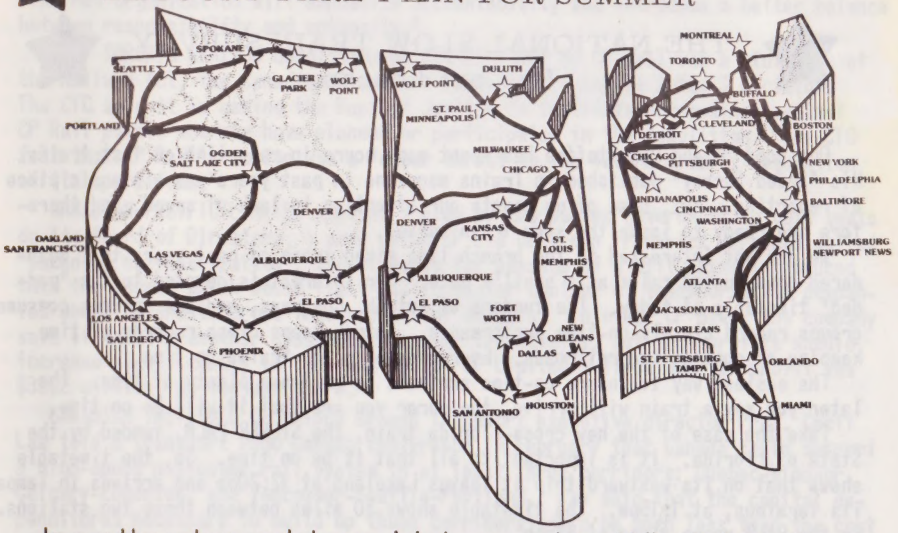

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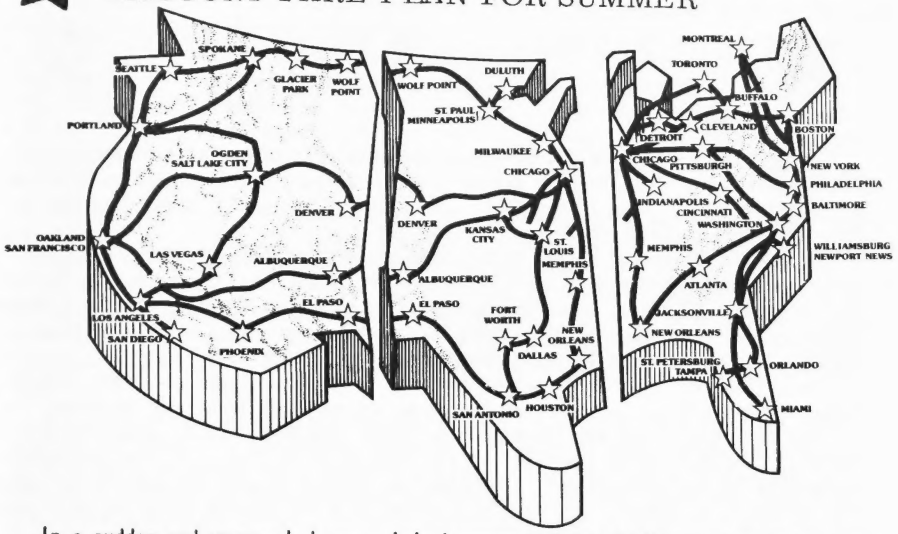

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Robert E. Gall told newsmen in Florida on May 13. He had flown there that day to ride a special roundtrip train Lakeland to Tampa, with demonstration bus Tampa to St. Petersburg, a trip organized by a Pinellas Park city councilman. Pinellas Park rail supporters were out in force, arguing against the train cutback. Amtrak VP Clark Tyler said in the press release that since the Amtrak Board was not going to consider the matter in May, Amtrak wanted to give the public the maximum time to comment. Comments can be sent to Clark Tyler in care of Amtrak at PO Box 37631, Washington DC 20013, or telephoned to a toll-free dedicated line at 800-368-0103. Washington DC residents should telephone 347-4352.

THE NATIONAL SLOW TRAIN SURVEY
By Carl Loucks

Our good friend Don Steffee has spent many hours in reporting on fast trains. His "Speed Survey" published in Trains magazine in past years was a classic piece of reporting. But, some of us devote our attention to lack of speed, and therefore are ready to issue the slow train survey.

We are not interested in the branch line mixed train of past years that meandered down rusted rails at a snail's pace. Our interest is devoted to the "padded" timetable of today. The funders of Amtrak, Congress, and the various consumer groups record closely on-time performance. Amtrak keeps close records of time keeping of contracting railroads. Everyone wants the trains on time.

The easiest way to insure on-time arrivals is to leave plenty of time. The later you say a train will arrive, the surer you are that it will be on time.

Take the case of the new cross-Florida train, the SILVER PALM, funded by the State of Florida. It is important to all that it be on time. So, the timetable shows that on its westward trip it leaves Lakeland at 12:20pm and arrives in Tampa, its terminus, at 1:15pm. The timetable shows 30 miles between these two stations. So the PALM roars along at 33mph.

BUT...you say... grade crossings, terminal congestion, and bad track require this speed. Not so. A check of the PALM going the other way shows the same 30 miles covered in 35 minutes, or a fast 52mph. There may be unique operating reasons for this train to go west at one half the speed it goes east, but the "Slow Train Survey" indicates that this difference is true in most long distance trains.

Here are some examples taken from the Amtrak system timetable of Oct 1982. The SILVER STAR takes 40 minutes going south and 23 minutes north between Hollywood and Miami. Instead of the northbound 36mph, the southbound card is for 21mph. The SUNSET from Pomona to Los Angeles manages a breakneck 42mph as it leaves going east, but westbound heading toward its arrival it does 22mph.

Padding is not unique to long distance trains. The MULES from St. Louis to Kansas City show times from Independence to Kansas City of 42 minutes westbound (16mph) and 21 minutes eastbound (32mph).

After much study, we are ready to give the 1983 "Slow Train Championship" to the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR. The schedule shows nine miles from Richmond to Oakland. Outbound this is done in 12 minutes, or 45mph. Westbound the time shows 55 minutes for the same nine miles. The calculator shows less than TEN MILES PER HOUR, the hands-down winner.

There seems a good reason why the on-time record of the ZEPHYR looks good. The reason--43 minutes of pad. Amtrak could insure on-time thruout the system by simply noting all arrival times with an asterisk, and then in the notes put (*) means arrival when it gets there.

Those of us who record this slow train record have an Association, the National Association of Slow Train Yearners--or just NASTY!

RAIL CANADA

VIA RAIL CANADA will consolidate administration at its Montreal head office, eliminating administrative jobs in its regional offices in Moncton, Montreal, Toronto and Winnipeg. In a May 10 press release the rail corporation said it has just completed a 6-month organization review designed to enable it to react more effectively to market demand. VIA President Pierre Franche said the reorganization will result in some early retirements, relocations and job eliminations. "The new organization will emphasize accountability and introduce a better balance between responsibility and authority."

WEST TORONTO STATION demolition on Nov 25, 1982 by CP Rail was a violation of the Railway Act, the Canadian Transport Commission ruled in a May 3 decision. The CTC said it is asking the Dept of Justice to institute proceedings against CP Rail people who may have planned or participated in the demolition. The CTC felt that CP Rail's action was a "clear threat to the future orderly regulation of its operations."

CANADIAN PACIFIC LIMITED opposes a plan by the Quebec government to gain seats on its Board of Directors, a move which CP Ltd Chairman Frederick Burbidge called "backdoor nationalization", and it hopes for passage of a bill being introduced into the Senate which would limit public sector control of transportation companies whose interests cross interprovincial borders. In other CP news, the company said it expects another disappointing year financially, but that profits should increase significantly in 1984 and 1985. CP Limited's first quarter profit was $32.2 million, or 44¢ per share.

CANADIAN INSTITUTE OF GUIDED Ground Transport executive director Prof. Cecil Law told a Transport 2000 Canada conference in February that Canada could support a high-speed passenger rail system in at least three corridors: Quebec-Windsor, Calgary-Edmonton, and Vancouver-Seattle-Portland. Law said that the capital expenditures necessary to build up those corridors would be much less than the cost of highways and airports.

THE "PRINCESS MARGUERITE" made its first cruise into fresh water since being launched in 1948 when it passed thru the Seattle ship canal to Lake Washington Apr 21 to tie up at Sand Point Naval Air Station for a Seattle Symphony fund-raising dinner held in the ship's dining room. The ship will have a discount fare for autos in effect until mid-June on the Seattle-Victoria run.

WHITE PASS & YUKON Railway may have some new hope for re-opening, after a Canadian Federal Government agreement to help re-open the Cyprus Anvil mine with a loan-grant package of $25 million. Closure of the mine last June led to the closure of the railway, which is dependent upon the mine's business.

TOWN OF NAKINA, Ontario worries that it will not survive if CN goes ahead with a plan to eliminate crew changes at that location. Seventeen maintenance employees would remain in Nakina, but 58 others would have to be transferred.

TRANSPORT 2000 QUEBEC on Mar 30 announced its new excursion program "Les Voyageries", to get city-center residents out on short day or 2-3 day low-cost holidays. With the help of Canada's Community Development Programme funds, bus and train trips to a variety of destinations around the province will be aimed at the 30-40% of Montreal families who never get out of town (most of them own no car). Harry Gow, Transport 2000 founder, said "It will show that the automobile need not be the only means of getting people out of their urban boxes, and will spotlight buses and passenger trains." T-2000 Quebec hopes to "undermine the idea of commercial tourism as being limited to air travel, plastic hotels, etc, and emphasize instead universal accessibility to tourism." For further information, call T-2000 Quebec at 514-523-8709.

★ Yosemite by Rail

By Sylvia & Ted Blishak

Yosemite Valley, with its indescribably spectacular scenery, was once accessible by train from Merced CA. The rail service did not survive World War II, and the rails themselves were scrapped and melted down for military purposes. These days, one can take Amtrak's twice-daily SAN JOAQUINS (which run between Oakland and Bakersfield) to Merced and connect to Yosemite with a tour package arranged by California Yosemite Tours (call your travel agent or Amtrak). There are several tour options available: a rental car and two nights at the Yosemite Lodge; a narrated bus trip into Yosemite, lunch, and one night at a Merced motel; a two or three night stay at Yosemite Lodge, including a narrated bus tour. All these require advance reservations and begin at the Merced Amtrak station.

Another option, which does not require reservations, is called "Yosemite-in-a-Day." The $39 tour (not including rail fare) includes the bus tour into the park, lunch at the Ahwahnee Hotel, and park admission fees.

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When we arrived at the Oakland station for the 7:45am departure of the SAN JOAQUIN, the train was pulled up behind the SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA about to leave for Sacramento. We climbed aboard the three-car Amfleet train. An announcement over the PA system invited us to come to the Amdinette for breakfast, where coffee, Danish pastry and "Amtrak McMuffins" were being served (the latter consisting of English muffin, Canadian bacon, and cheese). The announcer also reminded us that ice cream is once again on the menu. We received complimentary newspapers--which is not a standard amenity on the SAN JOAQUIN, but we heard that the long distance trains now provide papers for first class patrons, and Oakland was overstocked this morning, so the SAN JOAQUIN passengers were treated.

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As we finished the switching onto the Santa Fe, our conductor announced that now we would be able to run at 79mph. We passed thru Antioch, with its marinas and houseboats, and got up some speed over smooth track thru the Delta's fertile farmlands. Soon we were running slowly beside the levee of a canal which allows water to run at a level about 15 feet above the surrounding fields. We swayed along at about 20mph here, as the wet, unstable earth has done some shifting beneath the tracks during the unusually heavy rainy season.

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We missed our scheduled 10:43am arrival in Merced, arriving at 11:25. (We saw no signs of construction or improvements at any of the Amtrak stations along the route; Caltrans is scheduled to handle this task, which was delayed for a time when California's new governor was attempting to axe the SAN JOAQUINS.) The Merced station now has a Standard Rental Car service, and was open. However, it is short on charm and amenities, and had a pile of oversized rubber tires in one corner. Our tour bus was waiting, and we climbed aboard. We drove thru the tree-lined streets of Merced and felt we might have been transported to a Midwestern town of the 1930s. There are many lovely homes there, with beautiful lawns and gardens.

Outside town, we passed thru irrigated fields with pistachio and fig orchards. This flat farmland has rich soil, but a dry climate--under 12 inches of rain annually. As the highway rose toward the foothills, the land began to undulate, and we passed turkey and cattle ranches. Off to the northwest was a mountain range, and nothing but wide-open spaces between. Wildflowers were in profusion; violet-colored lupine was everywhere. Ancient slate outcroppings, which were once on the floor of the ocean, pushed up at odd angles, looking like tombstones, as we climbed into the Sierra Nevada foothills. We crossed into Mariposa County, where cattle ranchers came to raise beef for the gold miners. Old ranchhouses, with stone fences dividing the pastures, are still standing. There are still people making their living (altho not striking it rich) by mining gold here.

Our 80-mile bus ride featured a welcome break in Mariposa, where we stopped at the museum for a look at a collection of old gold mining equipment and enjoyed wine and cheese provided by Sunset. It was starting to rain as we headed onward, up the Merced River Canyon, where the deserted right-of-way of the Yosemite Valley Railroad is still visible across the river from the highway. We climbed along the rushing cascade, passing two slide areas where chunks of granite have blocked part of the road.

The train-to-bus transfer from the SAN JOAQUIN at Merced. Photo by Amtrak.

Yosemite Valley was shrouded in mists which obscured all but a hint of the granite cliffs and towers, providing the kind of dreamlike quality that Ansel Adams has captured so vividly in his photos. We caught glimpses of the falls,

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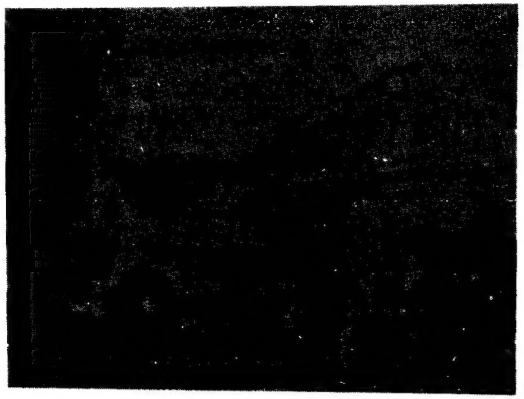
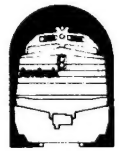
We missed our scheduled 10:43am arrival in Merced, arriving at 11:25. (We saw no signs of construction or improvements at any of the Amtrak stations along the route; Caltrans is scheduled to handle this task, which was delayed for a time when California's new governor was attempting to axe the SAN JOAQUINS.) The Merced station now has a Standard Rental Car service, and was open. However, it is short on charm and amenities, and had a pile of oversized rubber tires in one corner. Our tour bus was waiting, and we climbed aboard. We drove thru the tree-lined streets of Merced and felt we might have been transported to a Midwestern town of the 1930s. There are many lovely homes there, with beautiful lawns and gardens.

Outside town, we passed thru irrigated fields with pistachio and fig orchards. This flat farmland has rich soil, but a dry climate--under 12 inches of rain annually. As the highway rose toward the foothills, the land began to undulate, and we passed turkey and cattle ranches. Off to the northwest was a mountain range, and nothing but wide-open spaces between. Wildflowers were in profusion; violet-colored lupine was everywhere. Ancient slate outcroppings, which were once on the floor of the ocean, pushed up at odd angles, looking like tombstones, as we climbed into the Sierra Nevada foothills. We crossed into Mariposa County, where cattle ranchers came to raise beef for the gold miners. Old ranchhouses, with stone fences dividing the pastures, are still standing. There are still people making their living (altho not striking it rich) by mining gold here.

Our 80-mile bus ride featured a welcome break in Mariposa, where we stopped at the museum for a look at a collection of old gold mining equipment and enjoyed wine and cheese provided by Sunset. It was starting to rain as we headed onward, up the Merced River Canyon, where the deserted right-of-way of the Yosemite Valley Railroad is still visible across the river from the highway. We climbed along the rushing cascade, passing two slide areas where chunks of granite have blocked part of the road.



The train-to-bus transfer from the SAN JOAQUIN at Merced. Photo by Amtrak.



Yosemite Valley was shrouded in mists which obscured all but a hint of the granite cliffs and towers, providing the kind of dreamlike quality that Ansel Adams has captured so vividly in his photos. We caught glimpses of the falls,

with great aprons of frozen mist at their bases. There was still snow clinging to the cliffs, but none on the valley floor.

In spite of the rain and hail, the valley was crowded with cars and tour buses. The grand old hotel, which was recently spruced up for the Queen of England's visit, had never looked better. Our group was shown to a private dining room behind the lobby, with great high windows looking out to the granite walls nearby.

After a delicious London Broil lunch, Amtrak District Sales Manager Karen Myers spoke about the improvements Amtrak has made, stressing the all new or overhauled equipment. Amtrak credits Western travel agents with about 35% of its ticket sales--up 10% from a few years ago, and higher than the rest of the country, which averages only 23%. (This is less than airlines, who credit agents with over 50% of their sales--but while virtually all agencies sell air tickets, many do not handle Amtrak.) Amtrak's goal for 1983 is to have reservations access in the airline computer systems which many agents use. (Our personal opinion is that the reservations capability alone will not increase agency Amtrak sales, because the airline association has consistently refused to allow Amtrak to use its ticket stock; therefore, the computerized travel agent will still have to write his Amtrak ticket by hand.)

Merced — Yosemite Valley

Van or Motorcoach connects with arrivals and departures at the Merced AMTRAK Station.

After the travel agents received their Golden Spike Society plaques, Henry Luna of Great Western Tours took the podium and thanked Amtrak, on behalf of all the agents, for its improvements, its high commissions, and its support of travel agents. This support, I might add, is unique in an industry where many of our suppliers--airlines, cruise lines, hotels and car rental companies--maintain a love-hate relationship with agents. This results in attempts to cut our commissions, avoid paying commissions altogether, and advertising to encourage the consumer to bypass us and book directly with the carrier. Amtrak, to my knowledge, has genuinely and sincerely supported travel agencies.

We had a quick look around the hotel, then it was time to head back to the Merced train station. After an interminable and uncomfortable bus ride, we arrived a few minutes before train 709 pulled in.

Since Merced is adjacent to Castle Air Force Base, the home of the B-52s, we had the unique experience of watching one of the airborne leviathans roar overhead as it came in to land just as the SAN JOAQUIN pulled in at 6:58pm. And an incredible scene took place, as at least a dozen of our group turned away from the oncoming train and aimed their cameras at the airplane!

We climbed aboard the train, appreciating anew the great comfort and spacious accommodations of rail travel after our two-hour confinement in a bus. Sunset provided us with wine, cheese, and fruit as the sun sank behind the Coast Range.

We ran speedily along until we reached the same set of signals that had been red in the morning--they were still red. We decided to go to the Amdinette to try the ice cream, reinstated to Amtrak menus after at least a year's absence. We rated it excellent, but found the portions rather small. Ted ordered a Scotch, but was told that since a passenger that morning had been consuming Scotch all the way to Bakersfield, they were out. (They don't take on extra provisions in Bakersfield.)

Then a very odd thing happened: altho it wasn't raining, water began to pour from a spot on the Amdinette's ceiling! Luckily, it was over an unoccupied booth. We assumed that water condensed from the air conditioner wasn't draining thru its proper spout. We also recalled that older trains had the air conditioning equipment underneath rather than above the cars.

All in all, it was a day we won't forget. A train ride, being wined and dined and awarded by Amtrak, and chatting with people who are positive supporters of trains--what more could one ask?

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

MONTREAL TRANSIT SYSTEM shut down on May 11 as workers walked out in protest over a suspended maintenance worker. It was the sixth time in a year that a transportation strike had hit the Canadian city.

PHILADELPHIA'S SEPTA STRIKE may be near a resolution. On May 9 a tentative agreement was finally arrived at, which must be ratified.

SAN MATEO COUNTY, CA was hit by a strike of SamTrans bus drivers and mechanics, the first strike in the eight years the transit agency has been in existence.

CABLE CAR SHUTDOWN in San Francisco is hurting Fisherman's Wharf merchants badly. On May 11 the city's Board of Supervisors okayed the startup of an experimental bus route from Union Square to Fisherman's Wharf for the summer tourist season.

LOS ANGELES' METRO RAIL project has a financing problem to solve, as reported last issue. UMTA wants to put up only 50% of the needed money, since Houston has also asked for only 50% for its project. Metro officials went to Washington on May 9 with another offer--they would take only 62% of the cost. They were met with a cool Congressman William Lehman, chairman of the House appropriations subcommittee on transportation. The 62% still wasn't low enough, according to Lehman.

PITTSBURGH WILL SCRAP half of its fleet of 90 streetcars, and will refurbish the rest for its new underground light rail system. Gone will be the colorful custom paint jobs given to individual cars. About 30 of the cars are painted as commercial products such as candy bars or credit cards.

NEW YORK'S MTA is talking threats to shut down subway lines if there is a severe budget crisis. Candidates for closure are the Rockaways A Line, Franklin Avenue shuttle, Woodlawn Avenue service on IRT-4 train north of Yankee Stadium, and Jamaica Avenue J Line service, from Cypress Hills to the end of the line. In a May 9 report the MTA said that the subway system had experienced a 20% drop in patronage over the 1970-80 period.

THE POSTAL SERVICE will honor streetcars with a 20¢ stamp issue coming Oct 1. Each sheet of stamps will bear four different stamp designs: the first American streetcar, in New York City; an early electric streetcar in Montgomery AL; the nation's last horsecar, in Sulphur Rock AR; and the St. Charles Avenue streetcar of New Orleans.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSEMBLYMAN has introduced a bill that would require the state DOT to begin work on a roadway power system in the state, by which electric automobiles would be powered and guided by an electrical feeder line buried in the concrete of freeways. The bill is not expected to pass this year.

SAN DIEGO TROLLEY operation in May is being extended until 1:01am.

LONG BEACH-LOS ANGELES trolley line may follow Atlantic Avenue rather than Long Beach Boulevard, the route formerly used by the Pacific Electric Red Cars. Recent public hearings and city council actions have led to favoring the former alternative, due to opposition from some Long Beach Boulevard business interests.

RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR cars obtained by Amtrak have been sent to Beech Grove, but have not been designated for refurbishing yet. Amtrak says they are in careful storage there to guard them against vandalism.

AMTRAK TEST TRAIN ran on Southern Railway Charlotte-Raleigh NC on May 3 as a test of a proposed 403-b new section of the PALMETTO.

FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATOR Robert Blanchette resigned effective May 1 to become the head of an American subsidiary of the French TGV company. In what NARP speculated may be a related piece of news, Rock Island trustee William Gibbons on May 12 agreed to sell the bankrupt railroad's half interest in the joint BN/Rock Island Dallas-Houston line to the American subsidiary of TGV. The selling price, if approved by the bankruptcy court, would be $17.5 million.

★ Success of the TGV

By Guy Chartrand

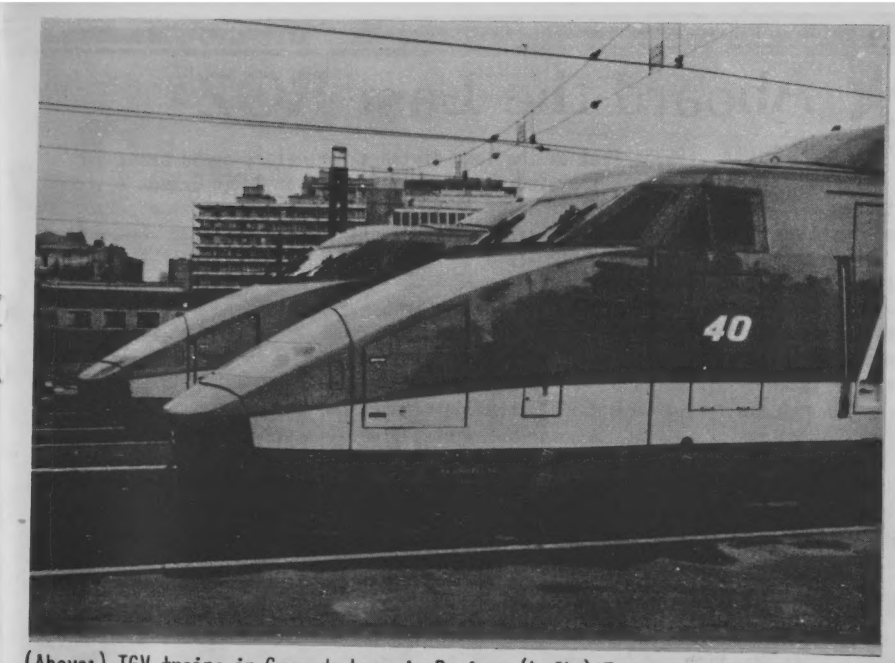
From April 12 to May 4, a group of 15 Transport 2000 Quebec members and civil servants made a trip to France, sponsored by the Office Franco-Quebecois pour la Jeunesse (a French-Quebec government agency). The trip was proposed by Transport 2000 Quebec so that citizens of that province could have a better chance to examine the French public transit system and railway passenger services.

The cities and the transit systems of Paris, Lyon, Grenoble and Chambery were visited by the group. We were impressed with the cooperation between the different authorities responsible in each of these areas, so that the public transit system users have the opportunity to use the transit system with only one transit pass. The orange pass of Paris is a good example of this. We noticed also a debate in many areas of France about the possible return of the tramways as a more economical means of carrying people than buses are. Such a debate is now going on in Grenoble and Nante, and there is a proposed return of the tramway for the suburbs of Paris by 1990.

The highlight of the trip to France was the visit and trip on the now-famous TGV. The group was received by SNCF officials at the Paris headquarters of the railways. Mr. Fleury, director of Marketing, and Mr. Leboeuf, director of research and development at the SNCF, gave a full report of the TGV after its 18 months of commercial operation. Here are some of the highlights of the success of the TGV:

The TGV has carried 10 million passengers in its first 18 months; of these, 2,7000,000 were first class passengers.

Of the 10 million, 62% were traveling between Paris and Lyon-St-Etienne (6,200,000 passengers), 20% Paris-Mediterranee (1,950,000 passengers, from May 1982), 6% on Paris-Dijon-Besancon (650,000), and 12% on the Paris-Geneve-Chambery (1,200,000).



(Above:) TGV trains in Gare de Lyon in Paris. (Left:) Transport 2000 Quebec members visit new Lyon Part-Dieu intermodal station due to open Jun 13. Photos by T-2000

Between 5000 and 6000 new passengers are attracted daily to the TGV. Of these, 1100 are diverted from air service and 3000 from the highways. The rest of the new TGV passengers would not have traveled without the new train. The train averages 61% filled.

Between Sep 1981 and Sep 1982 the TGV made 16,550 departures and traveled 12.81 million kilometers.

The new Lyon Part-Dieu intermodal station, built at a cost of $65 million, will open on Jun 13. It will be inaugurated by Mr. Francois Mitterand, the President of France. The northern part of the new line (116 kilometers Combs-La Ville-Saint Florentin) will open in Oct 1983.

The on-time performance of the TGV is 97.5%.

The TGV is having a positive effect on oil importations, as 100,000 tons of oil are being saved each year. The TGV is now carrying about 20,000 passengers per day, or 150,000 each week.

The SNCF has received 76 of the 85 TGV trainsets, and it has already ordered ten more sets. The PTT (French Postal Service) has ordered four trainsets for mail service, which will start next year.

The TGV is considered very successful, and beat by 15% the most optimistic ridership projections. Many new departures and destinations will be added in the fall, and the running time between Paris and Lyon will be only two hours (compared to 2hrs, 42mins now), with the opening of the northern end of the new line.

Starting in June, the maximum speed will be increased to 270 km/h.

Our group was, of course, very impressed by the TGV. I believe that the French have proven that when a sound political decision is made, the general public can benefit from such a great transportation system. The French Government could have decided to build another superhighway between Paris and Lyon. Instead, they decided to invest in the future. They decided to invest in a transportation system that can save France energy and carry its citizens in a fast and safe manner. We hope that our politicians will learn from them.

★ Aboard the Last RGZ

By "Chip" Sherman

The RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR, last of the long distance, privately-owned passenger trains in the U.S., has traveled its last mile. Denver & Rio Grande Western trains #17 and 18 made their last trips April 23 and 24, but even those trips were abbreviated by Mother Nature. However, the RGZ went out in a grand way!

With the word out that the RGZ would be making its last trip in April, reservations for the train were quickly sold out.

D&RGW's director of Passenger and Dining Car Services, Leonard J. Bernstein, sensitive to riders' desires to enjoy the Vista-Dome views, had car "Silver Shop" added to the train in March. "Silver Shop", a Vista-Dome-dormitory-buffet lounge, made a total of six domes on the RGZ.

On April 14, westbound train 17 crept by Thistle, Utah and into Salt Lake City for the last time. A track upheaval on April 13 was the first indication of an impending mudslide. D&RGW threw all it had in men and equipment into fighting the mudslide, but to no avail. The water-saturated clay slid into Spanish Fork River, burying D&RGW's main line, U.S. highways 6 and 89, and causing the river to back up and flood the town of Thistle. By April 23 the slide was 130 feet high, and water behind it was 80 feet deep.

D&RGW officials arranged with the Union Pacific to start rerouting its traffic over the UP beginning April 15. One of the first trains to take the detour would be the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR. Leaving Salt Lake City at 7:50am on April 15, the RGZ started its one and only trip over the UP's Sherman Hill route. The train took D&RGW tracks to Ogden. There UP engine 9003, a GP-40X, was put on ahead of D&RGW's F9A #5771. The UP unit was put on for its cab signalling capabilities. UP kept the train restricted to 50mph for most of the route. The RGZ graced the rails of Sherman Hill at 6:45pm. Train 18's detour resulted in its missing its 9:30pm arrival time in Denver by 50 minutes.

With the RGZ back in Denver, railroad officials implemented RGZ service only to Grand Junction, Colorado, and bus service beyond to Salt Lake City. At Grand Junction the train was turned on the Montrose Branch Wye. With U.S. 6 and 89 closed, buses had to take a 130-mile detour. Thus, departures from Grand Junction were delayed by 30 minutes to 1hour, 45minutes the last week of service.

April 23 found the RGZ's consist as: engine 5771, steam generator 253, engines 5762 & 5763; cars 1230 baggage-combine, diner "Silver Banquet", dome coaches

"Silver Colt", "Silver Pony" and "Silver Mustang", 48-seat coaches "Silver Pine" and "Silver Aspen", dome lounge "Silver Shop", dome coach "Silver Bronco", and dome observation lounge "Silver Sky."

On the station's platforms, railfans and the news media were conspicuous. At exactly 7:30am, Conductor Zane Barry gave the "All aboard" for the last time out of Denver Union Terminal. Aboard, the Intermountain and Colorado Midland Chapters of the National Railway Historical Society as well as the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club had pooled their efforts to make the trip something special. In the diner, special breakfast, lunch and dinner menus were provided. At lunch,

(Above:) On the evening of April 23, the RGZ rests in Grand Junction, awaiting its last run into Denver.

(Left:) Railfans photograph the RGZ on its last westbound run, on April 23, in Byers Canyon, just west of Hot Sulphur Springs CO. Photos by Paul Rayton.

fresh red carnations appeared on the tables. NRHS member Richard Luckin came up with a commemorative china plate which passengers could purchase and eat from. Several handouts also kept the train's passengers well-informed.

A highlight for many was experiencing the last operating diner one last time. Breakfast still offered patrons steak with two eggs any style, as the train climbed the foothills. The luncheon menu offered Rio Grande Chef's Salad Bowl, Hot Barbecued Beef on Bun, or Sliced Turkey, as well as other selections, to be enjoyed along the Colorado River in Glenwood Canyon. Dinner on the return trip was a choice of the famous Boneless Rocky Mountain Trout, Hot Roast Beef Sandwich, or London Broil au Jus. As usual, the meals and service were superb.

The station stop at Glenwood Springs was where the train crews got a break. Two-thirds of the passengers detrained to enjoy the huge, natural hot springs pool. With a substantially lighter passenger load, the ZEPHYR continued on to Grand Junction.

Number 17 pulled into its premature terminus on schedule. As cameras captured the occasion, passengers detrained, the Salt Lake City bus departed, and the train was wyed. With the train back at the station, carmen set up the blue flags and set to work preparing the train for its return trip.

On Sunday, April 24, the train's stainless steel cars glistened under warm, sunny skies. However, train 18 had to miss its scheduled 1:55pm departure awaiting the Salt Lake City bus and its 22 passengers. With the bus in, D&RGW train 18 left Grand Junction for the last time at 3:39pm.

The first call for dinner was announced upon departing Rifle, Colorado. Wine was a popular item that night, as many toasted the Silver Lady that had served the traveling public so long and so well. A glimpse of the past was on every table, but missed by some. The table linen still used was embroidered with the CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR emblem. Dinner was served until the kitchen stock was exhausted. Most were served, but a few had to be turned away. The "Silver Banquet's" crew cleaned up the diner that night rather sadly, for the next morning they would be unemployed.

At Glenwood Springs, 255 passengers boarded to swell the train's passenger count to nearly 400. A good-sized crowd was on hand to wave the train a fond farewell. The six Vista-Domes were full as the train skirted the Colorado River and entered Glenwood Canyon. As dusk fell, State Bridge, Gore Canyon and Kremmling were passed. At Granby, the last station stop before Denver, the last ticket for the train was purchased by Ralph Weege of Chicago, Illinois.

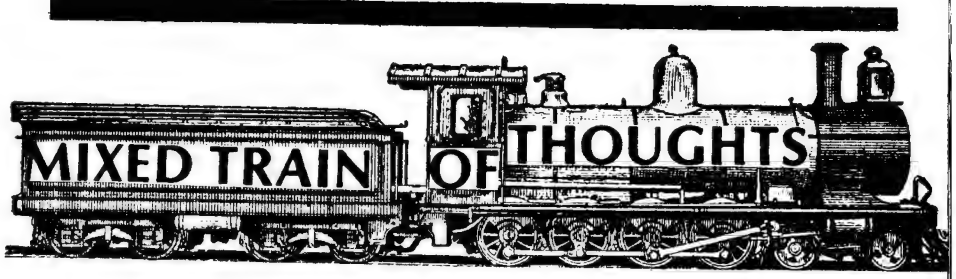
Snow still covered the ski slopes of the Winter Park ski area. Then, the moon and stars disappeared as the train entered the 6.2-mile long Moffat Tunnel. Emerging at East Portal, train 18 was met with several headlights and photo flashes.

As the train descended from the Continental Divide, passengers were still riding in the vestibules, enjoying the Dutch door views. Unfortunately, someone tampered with the "Silver Sky's" vestibule lights. This prompted D&RGW's special agents to clear the vestibules to safeguard them from possible vandalism.

Pulling into Denver Union Terminal on track 1, the RGZ was met by admirers, flash cameras, newsmen and a band. It was 11:05pm, one hour and 35 minutes late, but no one seemed to mind.

With a tear in his eye, Trainman D. L. Knuter bid his passengers a last farewell. Up front, a D&RGW switcher was quickly coupled to engine 5771. Carmen were quick to close the car traps behind detrained passengers, as officials were concerned about possible vandalism. With a highball from the carmen, the entire train rolled out of the station and down to the Burnham Shops. A page in railroad history was closed.

D&RGW was quick to transfer to Amtrak six of their cars. The next day, Amtrak's eastbound CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR, train 6, had the following cars coupled to its rear: "Silver Aspen", "Silver Pine", "Silver Mustang", "Silver Pony", "Silver Colt", and trailing was "Silver Banquet." Amtrak was sending them to Beech Grove, Indiana for eventual HEP conversion.



RIO GRANDE RAILWAY is still estimating a July 1 completion date for the reconstruction of its line thru Thistle, Utah. An Amtrak official talked with D&RGW's Leonard Bernstein on May 13, and was told that grading is expected to be complete by Jun 15, and the tunnel and trackwork completed by Jul 1. The tunnel is a 2600-foot affair, and workers are tunneling from both ends. One crew manages 35 feet per day, and the other, working in less stable rock, makes 20 feet per day progress. Crews of the Morrison-Knutsen Company of Boise ID are performing the tunneling work. The completed new portion of line will be three-eighths of a mile shorter than the original D&RGW line, as it bypasses the newly created lake that is about three miles long and up to 100 feet deep. The natural dirt dam created by the slide of early April is deemed solid enough to leave in place.....

THE NORTH STAR is once more in serious jeopardy. Rail supporters had assumed that the governor's requested $575,000 for fiscal 1984 and $604,000 for 1985 would remain in the state budget, and advertising had begun for summer travel on the Twin Cities-Duluth 403-b train. However, on Apr 18 the funds were withdrawn from the budget draft by a motion of Sen. Marilyn Lantry of St. Paul. A battle over the money is expected, which might be resolved in conference committee later. If the state doesn't approve the funds, the train would be unfunded Jul 1...

★ ★ ★

FOUR AMTRAK SLEEPERS, numbers 2752, 2755, 2759 and 2761, have been sold to the Mexican National Railways for service in Mexico. The 10-6 sleepers are all evidently ex-Santa Fe "Palm" series cars. The cars went to Brownsville for refurbishing, deadheading on the rear of the EAGLE, train 21 of May 10. The consist of that train was: engines 370, 371; cars 34008, 32053, 39974, 34004, 38028, 31006, 31019, 31025, 34037, 34038, 39900, 2911, 1151, deadheads 2761, 2752, 2755, 2759. Altho the cars had been in storage for two years, they were reported to be in very good condition.....

THE CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR was delayed several days at the Great Salt Lake crossing in Utah because of high winds that were threatening to damage the SP track. The train detoured in both directions on the more southerly WP route on May 11. On May 8 the problem began, and on May 9 the detour was attempted, but the WP line was also knocked out by the storm. Severe snowstorms continued to hit the Rockies unseasonably late in May.....

TWO ELECTRIC LOCOMOTIVES have been sold by Amtrak to a mining operation in Fruitland, New Mexico. Utah International Inc. operates a coal mine there on a Navajo reservation. E60 engines 966 and 968 were sent from Wilmington DE to Chicago and then to Albuquerque via the BROADWAY LTD and SOUTHWEST LTD. At Albuquerque, Santa Fe mounted them on trucks for shipment to Fruitland, 189 miles distant.....

AMTRAK'S AUTO-FERRY will consist of the following equipment, according to Amtrak plans as of May 1: 3 P-30 locomotives, 10-6 sleeper for crew dorm, 5 Amfleet II coaches, dome coach, cafe lounge, dome coach, buffet food service car, table car, buffet food service car, 5 10-6 sleepers, 20 tri-level auto racks, and 3 bi-level auto racks. Total coach-class seats are 387, and total first class accommodations are 30 bedrooms and 45 roomettes.....

THE COAST STARLIGHT derailed three deadheading cars on its northbound run in the early hours of May 11 at Dorris CA, near the Oregon border. The last 3 of 4 ex-Santa Fe Hi-level cars derailed, and all four were removed from the train, with a 48-minute delay. The cars were headed to Seattle to be used on an excursion train to Madras, Oregon. Presumably other cars were substituted.....

THE SOUTHWEST LIMITED, with the Apr 24 schedule change, can now be ridden from Albuquerque to Lamy NM and return in a single day. Boardings are expected to increase in Albuquerque due to the new times. Schools, day care centers, etc. will be able to make the short excursion trip (cost is $24.50 roundtrip).....

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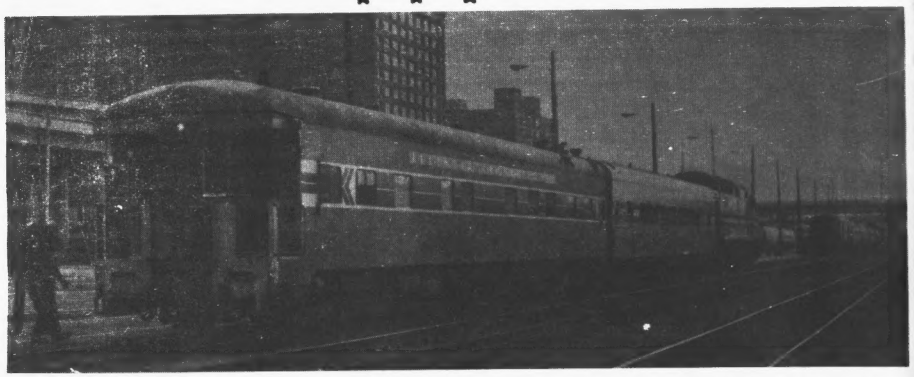


ST. LOUIS-CARBONDALE test train shown above ran on Mar 17 as a test run for the proposed St. Louis-Carbondale-New Orleans train. It covered the 95 miles in 2 hours, 45 minutes, partly due to slow running thru East St. Louis and because of the 50mph maximum speed from Belleville to Du Quoin. Altho the test run was not publicized, at a couple of towns along the route there were crowds at trackside to watch the train pass. The train consisted of F40 engine #370, one HEP Heritage coach and an ICG business car (in Amtrak stripes). ICG, Amtrak and Illinois DOT officials were aboard. Recent conversations with Amtrak indicate that there is better than a 50-50 chance of the train's running this fall. However, up to $200,000 in track and station improvements are necessary, mostly between Mac Arthur Bridge and Belleville. Amtrak also wants the 50mph speed limit increased to 70mph for its train, so the running time may be reduced to about 2 hours, 15 minutes (Photo and report by Mark S. Bucol).....

★ ★ ★

BN HAS REVERSED the direction of traffic on the one-way couplet of tracks between Pasco and Spokane WA, so the westbound EMPIRE BUILDER now operates on the ex-SP&S right-of-way to Pasco, backing into the station just before 4am. The eastbound train now travels on the ex-NP right-of-way via Ritzville. The change apparently was made to reduce fuel consumption on grain trains operating west from Spokane. The ex-SP&S route has less curvature and a more favorable grade west from Spokane than the ex-NP line formerly used by westbound runs.....

EASTBOUND EMPIRE BUILDER from Portland was delayed for five hours in Wallula Gap on Apr 23 by a rockslide near milepost 212 (near Mound Pond described in Glenn Lee's article in RTN 255). A slide detector fence was broken, setting off block signals. As there are no roads in the area, access by repair crews was slow.....

TRANSPORT ACTION, the publication of Transport 2000 Canada, has been changed from small magazine to newsletter format for faster publication and mailing, and will appear six times per year instead of quarterly. For information, write to: T-2000, PO Box 858, Station B, Ottawa, Ont., Canada K1P 5P9.....

AMTRAK BOARD OF DIRECTORS meeting for May was being held on May 18 at the Beech Grove Maintenance Facility in Beech Grove IN, so the Board could have a tour of the facility. On the agenda were: Approval of commercial leases--30th St Station, Philadelphia; Extension of lease for parking lot, Providence RI; Resolution authorizing a change in investment policy for corporate cash; commitment approval request for temporary office space in Boston. No really colorful matters being considered...

NORTH STAR ADVERTISING was running in newspapers in the Twin Cities in May. An ad we saw featured a photo of the picturesque Duluth depot with the headline: Amtrak takes you to 19th century Duluth in 20th century comfort. Schedule and fare information were given in the ad. As of mid-May, the NORTH STAR was still operating with Superliners. The train could return to Amfleet cars with the beginning of summer, but no word on that was available yet.....

THE "NIEUW AMSTERDAM", Holland America Cruises' new ship, has not been accepted by the cruise line, and May and June cruises have been cancelled. The line said that the ship did not meet its specifications 100% because of "a variety of minor things".....

THE AMTRAK "PENNSYLVANIAN" celebrated its third birthday on Apr 27, Amtrak noted in a press release. Amtrak and PennDOT held brief ceremonies before departure time that day in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. Both trains offered free cake and coffee to passengers.....

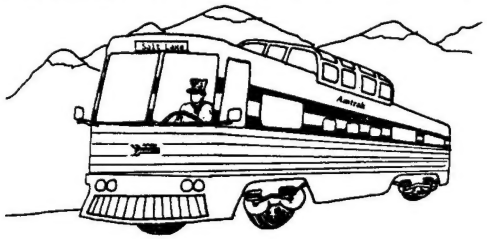
TEMPORARY TAMPA STATION facility had funding approved at the April Amtrak Board meeting. The historic Tampa station is being rehabilitated and turned into a multi-modal transportation center. The 2880-square foot temporary station will be a modular structure located behind the present station. A temporary canopy will be built for weather protection. Amtrak said the temporary station will be large enough to accommodate all projected growth in ridership during the 2-3-year renovation period. The $280,500 modular station can be disassembled and used elsewhere once the permanent Tampa station reopens.....

★ ★ ★

THE INTERNATIONAL LIMITED had the second best short-haul performance of the Amtrak system in February, and March was even stronger. Weekend ridership has been exceptionally heavy, according to reports; on March 13 over 300 passengers were recorded thru the Port Huron-Sarnia tunnel (only to have the VIA engine break down just west of Port Huron). In May the Associated Students of Michigan State University was running a group to Toronto as the tourist season begins. The train has been having timekeeping problems on the Chicago end. Ridership is also low beyond Battle Creek and Kalamazoo. With the connection to the CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR now broken, something will have to be done to improve ridership between Flint/Lansing and Chicago. Hammond-Whiting remains a fairly poorly used stop except for the commuter trains. In Michigan news, Amtrak is reported reluctant to spend any of the jobs bill money earmarked for Jackson and East Lansing. Amtrak has expressed a willingness to spend about $100,000 at each station, but is resisting local efforts to make a significant upgrade in facilities.....

WASHINGTON STATE AMTRAK people admit privately that it was a mistake to reroute the EMPIRE BUILDER to the Wenatchee line (ex-GN) 18 months ago. There has been little business at Wenatchee, when compared to business lost at Pasco, Yakima and Ellensburg; and Everett has produced much less business than the old Auburn stop which served Tacoma and the growing South King County suburban area south of downtown Seattle. Car utilization also hasn't lived up to Amtrak's expectations. The one-day turnaround of equipment Amtrak wanted at Seattle hasn't panned out, so some of the equipment arriving in Seattle in the morning from the East goes out the next morning on the PIONEER after a 22-hour layover; and equipment coming in on the PIONEER at 9pm stays over in Seattle and goes out the next afternoon on the EMPIRE BUILDER.....

STATE OF WYOMING had a lawsuit challenging Amtrak's pullout of that state dismissed this month. However, the state Attorney General's office said on May 10 that it would appeal the case to the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. In the meantime, Mr. James Jordan, president of the newly formed, Colorado-based Colorado Midland Railroad, on May 3 presented a proposal to the Rawlins city council to inaugurate rail passenger service between Denver and Salt Lake City on the Union Pacific Railroad, thru southern Wyoming. Jordan stressed that his company's plans would only proceed after public support for the service had been gauged, and there would be no interference with the lawsuit brought against Amtrak by the state of Wyoming. If the discontinuance of service is allowed, the CM proposes running an overnight service between the two end points offering coach, sleeper and diner/lounge service. The company has not officially approached UP with their proposal. Tho the company would initially provide service using refurbished, older equipment, Jordan stated that they hope to eventually purchase all new equipment. The company has already proposed purchasing 27 cars and nine locomotives from an unannounced source. It would plan on utilizing current stations as well as adding a stop in Brighton CO and returning service to downtown Cheyenne. The company plans to offer an expanded baggage and package express service, and hopes to add such amenities as a stenographer and barber for first class passengers. Food aboard the train would be fresh and prepared on-board. The company proposes a fare of $56.25 one way for



Denver-Salt Lake coach, and $75 first class plus a $34.20 roomette charge. The company, named after the now-abandoned Colorado carrier between Colorado Springs and Grand Junction, reportedly has investors willing to put in $2.5 million, with the balance to be borrowed from banks in Colorado, Wyoming and Utah. After an initial period, common stock would be issued. The company also plans to go after Denver-Salt Lake business traffic and longer distance commuter traffic into Denver. The Rawlins city council was supportive but non-committal, in view of the pending legal action against Amtrak. The drawing above was made by a critic of Amtrak's current bus service thru Colorado. The flyer reads "Fresh from Beech Grove!, Amtrak... proudly presents the 1983 version of the famed CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR, featuring individual reclining seats, a washroom, an 'engineer' and our new, authentic-like 'vista-dome.' Yes, now you and your family can travel alongside real railroad tracks on the most beautiful journey in America. Eat at real restaurant-like restaurants with real flatware or go up in the vista-dome for a panoramic view of the Rockies. On Amtrak's new 'CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR' service you will stop at real railroad stations and see real railroaders from a distance... Remember, only Amtrak gives you the experience of 'Through the Eisenhower Tunnel--not around it!'".....

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THE GEORGIA RAILROAD last branch line mixed trains had the following consists: SBD mixed train 511 (Barnett to Washington GA), Barnett GA Apr 29: engine WofA 6795; cars 3 freight cars, Chessie coach 5, SCL caboose 1100. SBD mixed train 530 Milledgeville to Camak GA), Sparta GA Apr 29: engine SCL 6760; cars 2 covered hoppers, SCL caboose 902, Chessie coach 7. SBD mixed train 532 (Macon to Milledgeville GA), Milledgeville Apr 29: engine SBD 6617, one hopper, one covered hopper, Chessie coach 6, L&N caboose 6124. SBD #108, the eastbound main line mixed train, was assigned two coaches on Apr 29: GA 120 and Chessie coach 3. There was no

mixed train on the Athens Branch, since Seaboard had obtained Georgia PSC authority to provide substitute passenger service along that line. The Chessie coaches are ex-Clinchfield cars which operated on the Chessie's steam train. The consists of the last main line mixed trains were as follows: SBD Advance 103, Augusta to Atlanta mixed, Union Point GA, May 6: engines SBD 4978, WofA 6795; cars 7 freight cars, coaches L&N 2554 & 2572 (owned by Kentucky Rwy Museum and painted and lettered L&N), Chessie 3 & 5, SCL caboose 825. SBD Advance 108, Atlanta to Augusta mixed, Atlanta GA, May 6: engines SBD 6051 "Franklin M Garrett", SBD 6013; cars one freight car, coaches Chessie 8, CRR 103 & 101 (both KY Rwy Museum), L&N caboose 6608. (Report by Lyle Key).....

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THE YANKEE CLIPPER derailment at Clinton CT on Apr 28, reported last issue, was caused by a malfunctioning front truck on the seventh car, Amtrak announced on May 2. That car was the lead car of the set of three that broke loose from the train. It, car 21011, ended up hanging precariously from a railroad crossing over a highway.....

MAXIMUM TRIP LENGTH on an All Aboard America fare came up in issue 264, where we reported an unidentified man who went 5131 miles for $125. Three more entries in the "contest" have been received. Shields World Travel of Pleasanton CA reports a couple from Dublin CA who made the following trip from Apr 26 thru May 25 (they must be still riding as we write this!): San Jose-Los Angeles-Gallup-Lamar-Marceline-Fort Madison-Chicago-Toronto-Niagara Falls-New York-Washington-Kissimmee-Washington-Connellsville-Valparaiso-Chicago-Denver-Provo-Salt Lake-Ontario-Portland-Pasco-Whitefish-Rugby-Red Wing-Chicago-Effingham-Jackson-New Orleans-Houston-Del Rio-Tucson-Los Angeles-San Jose. The trip was mixed first class and coach, and the total cost was $1433. Amtrak said it would have been $4886 without the discount fare. It took Amtrak agents two days to calculate the price. Then along came reader William MacRae of Oneida WI, who traveled 6852 miles for $225: Milwaukee-Seattle-Davis-Los Angeles-San Diego-Los Angeles-Oakland-Reno-Chicago-Milwaukee. That's slightly over 3¢ per mile. Finally, reader Lawrence Hughes of Berkeley CA did 6064 Amtrak miles for $125 (2¢ a mile). In addition, he went 1828 non-Amtrak miles, mostly in Mexico. His trip went Oakland-Ogden-Salt Lake-Denver-Los Angeles-San Antonio-Mexicali-Benjamin Hill-Sufragio-Chihuahua-Cd. Juarez-El Paso-Los Angeles-Portland-Spokane-Seattle-Richmond CA. He notes that his mileage count includes 943 Seattle-Richmond but his actual mileage was different as his southbound COAST STARLIGHT of Mar 27 detoured thru the Feather River Canyon because of a derailment on SP south of Klamath Falls.....

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SOME TYPOS SPOTTED in the current (Apr 24) Amtrak system timetable by reader J. M. Versaggi: (page 36:) the INTERNATIONAL LIMITED, trains 365 and 367, are shown with two different grades of food service; (page 39:) the Chicago-Milwaukee table header also reads St. Paul/Minneapolis in error; (page 39:) the NORTH STAR does not travel on the Milwaukee Road St. Paul-Cambridge; (pages 52-55:) Wyoming stations are still shown in the station directory.....

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC DEATHS decreased in 1982 by 11%, from 49,301 to 43,990, according to a May 15 announcement from the National Transportation Safety Board. All types of transportation fatalities decreased except for airline, which increased from 4 to 235. The better highway record is attributed to less driving in the recession, especially by the more accident-prone younger drivers.....

JAPANESE BULLET TRAIN had an accidental opening of automatic doors at 106mph on May 12 between Omori and Oyama; there were no injuries.....

AMTRAK AND MERRILL LYNCH will hold investment seminars once a month aboard the BANKERS to New York. The first was held May 10.....

A MICHIGAN BILL to let the state DOT set train speed limits, which would help Amtrak, appeared to be passing early in May.....

AN EXTENSION COURSE in Western Railroading will be given at Cal State RR Museum in Sacramento Jun 4-5. Contact UC Berkeley Extension, 2223 Fulton, Berkeley 94720... News in this issue is updated thru May 18, 1983.

CORRECTION: RTN stated last issue that the last run of the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR, on Apr 24, was westbound from Denver to Grand Junction. The run actually was eastbound, from Grand Junction to Denver. The cover photo last issue was of the last westbound run, made on Apr 23. RTN regrets the error.

CARS & CONSISTS

*SILVER STAR, train 81, New York Apr 30: engines 970 (NY-DC), 389 (DC-St. Pete), 384 (DC-Kissimmee); cars 1175, 1620, 2889, 2985, 2881, 2891, 28014, 8516, 2446, 2447, 2880, 2885, 2923, 2083, 25047, 8514, (St. Pete section:) 3117, 25024, 25021. Special group movement; train sold out; left NY 30mins late.

*Providence & Worcester Excursion train, Apr 30: engine P&W 2001, generator car 51 (ex-E9-B unit); snack car 8340, coaches 4594, 4592, 4583, observation "The New Englander", engine 1701. All cars in P&W orange & brown colors.

*New Haven RR Historical & Technical Association East Wind fantrip, May 1: engine 0350 (F40PH); coaches 7614, 7604, 7624, 7625, Amcafe 20007, 7600, 7000.

*SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, train 6, Oakland Apr 21: engines 372, 357; cars 1186, 1227, 39931, 32066, 38009, 33015, 31000, 34010, 34001 (off at Sparks), (on at Ogden:) 34064, 32202, 34033, 32046.

*CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR, train 5, Denver Apr 25: engines 357, 372; cars 1235, 39931, 32066, 38009, 33015, 31000, 34064, 34008, 32002, 34010, 32046.

*SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA, train 15, Sacramento Apr 21: engines 329, 204; cars 1126, 2996 "Pine Hill", 2941 "Pacific Waters", 28306, 21830, 21875. Same, Apr 26: engine 243; cars 1127, 2984 "Pine Cavern", 2997 "Pine Ridge", 28305, 21880, 21872.

*SOUTHWEST LIMITED, train 4, Albuquerque Apr 27: engines 254, 244; cars 1153, 1132, 39921, 34034, 39958, 39975, 38032, 32048, deadhead dome 9486 (to Beech Grove).

*CAPITOL LIMITED, train 441, McKeesport PA Apr 25: engines 330, 267; cars 1249, 1370, 2886, 25076, 25084, 28008, deadheads from Washington Great American Rail Roadshow: 39933, 34040, 38018, 33022, 32053. Same, Apr 26: engine 272; cars 1261, 1152; cars deadhead diner 8503, 2933 "Pacific Skies", dome 9401 (first westbound revenue run of 9401), 25086, 28011.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"'There is a saying in Wyoming that when you die you do not go directly to either heaven or hell,' said Mr. Nelson. 'First you go to Denver, and lay over for three hours.'"

--William E. Schmidt in New York Times, Apr 22.

"It takes patience to take a train, so why do those who do not possess it always book a seat? One's own inner peace urged the cry: 'Slow down! Relax! Enjoy!' Maybe eight-cylinder, eight-lane, jumbo-jet America does not deserve the Rio Grande Zephyr. Maybe the country is too loutish for a good train."

--Gregory Jaynes in Time magazine May 16.

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB***

"The famed Rio Grande Zephyr can't be kept in service beyond its scheduled final run Sunday because neither its crews nor its cars will be available, a lawyer familiar with the operation said Friday.

"The attorney, who asked to remain anonymous, said that 'when the equipment rolls into Denver Sunday night,' the on-board employees are to be discharged and the dining car, dome car and lounge car are to be turned over to Amtrak for shipment east to be used in commuter trains."

--Jack Cox in Denver Post, Apr 23.

(Where they'll be the hit of the Northeast Corridor.)

EXPRESS ADS

VIA RAIL CANADA, AMTRAK, EURAIL PASS, 20th CENTURY RAIL TOURS - Tickets and reservations - WE KNOW HOW! One call does it all. Pay by credit card or check. Tickets mailed directly to you. Contact GREAT WESTERN TOURS, masters of rail travel, Sheraton Palace Hotel, Suite 900, San Francisco 94105. (415) 398-2994.

DINING CAR CHINA, glasses, silver, cloth. Timetables, guides, stationery, rules, metal & Pullman items, annual reports. Many railroads. Long 37¢ stamped envelope brings list. J. McClellan, 1752 S. Wichita, Wichita, KS 67213. Will buy items.

July 30-31, August 6-7, 1983, "Steam Chicago Style" The 20th Century RR Club and Norfolk Southern Corp. are proud to announce the operation of four steam-powered excursions from Chicago to be operated with N&W's J class locomotive 611. The "Nickel Plate Limited" will operate to Ft Wayne, In. and return on July 30 and August 7. The "Wabash Cannonball" will operate to Decatur, Il. and return on July 31 and August 6. All trips depart and arrive Chicago Union Station. Consist to include recording car, open window and air conditioned coaches, souvenir snack car and first class section featuring domes, diner and observation car. For complete details send a long SASE to "Steam Chicago Style", Dept R, Box 16-611, Summit IL 60501.

RAILROAD INFORMATION. 5-7 pages of NEW ENGLAND model railroad shows, railfan days, tourist railroad and rail excursion schedules. Send $3.00 for 4 issues (75¢ for sample issue) to RAILROAD INFORMATION, 77 Horne St., Dover NH 03820.

DELAWARE VALLEY RAILS, the 192-page railroad and rail transit guide to the 15-county Philadelphia region. Amtrak, suburban, trolleys, freight, industrials, etc. 25 rosters, 90 photos, 15 maps. $11.50 (Pennsylvanians add 69¢ tax). $12.50 outside U.S. John R. Pawson, Box 411, Willow Grove, PA 19090.

WANTED: 1 copy of FROM ZEPHYR TO AMTRAK (Prototype Publs) & ZEPHYRS CHIEFS AND OTHER ORPHANS (RPC Publs). R. Pee Jr, 5280 New London Trace, Atlanta GA 30327.

NATIONAL ASS'N OF TIMETABLE COLLECTORS wants you! Annual dues only $15 incl 15 issues + many activities. Tom Coval 21 E Robin Rd Holland PA 18966. Sample free.

Fantastic clear plastic public timetable slip covers. Finest quality. Only $8.99 per 100, 500 for $39. 1000 for $60. Also 55 timetables for only $13, a great bargain. Tom Coval, 21 E. Robin Road, Holland PA 18966.

GISELLE'S TRAVEL, 1215 4th St, Sacramento CA 95814 is located NEAR THE AMTRAK STATION and the RAILROAD MUSEUM in "Old Sacramento." We handle VIA Rail Canada, Amtrak and all rail travel in Europe. For all your rail needs call (916) 446-1211. The rail experts.

GLACIER RAIL HOLIDAY, five summer departure dates, fully escorted all-inclusive tours, using privately owned railroad cars. For additional information, contact Rio Vista Railways, P.O. Box 19992, Los Angeles, Calif. 90019. (213) 231-8442. Pay by check or credit card. Tickets sent to you by certified mail.

"ISSUES IN AMERICAN RAIL TRAVEL", RTN's little book on important problems with America's rail passenger revival, is almost ready for publication. Price will be $4.50, which includes relevant tax & postage. Full details will be given later in RTN. Rail Travel News, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

RTN ADVERTISING RATES: Express Ads cost just $1.00 per line of 80 spaces. Display ads are only $1.25 per square inch. Send your order to: RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

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MOVING?

Be sure to send RTN your change of address as early as possible. Don't rely on the Postal Service to forward your mail!

RAIL FANTRIPS

Jun 10 & alternate Fridays thereafter: Mystery Express lvs NY Penn Station for Montreal on MONTREALER route; psgr participation mystery play. Return on ADIRONDACK. $350 double occup. Mystery Express, 28 Waverly Pl, Madison NJ 07940.

Jun 11: New Delaware & Ulster Rail Ride begins tourist excursions Arkville-Fleischmanns NY in N. Catskills. Roster incl ex-NYC M-405 diesel railcar, Brill 1928 "Red Heifer" etc. Route 28, Arkville NY 12406. (914) 586-DURR. $3.50; child $1.75.

Jun 18: "Frisco French Flier" 1st Amtrak train St. Louis-Ste. Genevieve, Amfleet cars, diner, dome lounge extra fare may be avail. $35, child $29. American Association of Railroaders Inc, 3422 Osage St, St. Louis MO 63118. Phone 752-3148.

Virginia Steam Train Excursions: Jun 25, 26, Jul 2: to Front Royal VA; Jul 3,9,10: to Charlottesville VA; Jul 16: to Hagerstown MD; all lv from Alexandria VA. $30 up. Steam Train, PO Box 762, Gaithersburg MD 20877. Engines N&W 611, S&A 750.

Jul 9: Utica-Richfield Springs NY, no psgr serv in 50 yrs; photo runbys; Alco diesel, open-window coaches, dome obs. $13, child $10. Also Jul 2,3,10 trips for non-railfan public. John Weber, 7556 Oriskany Road, Rome NY 13440.

Jul 20, Aug 2,23: Patio Dinner Parties at San Juan Capistrano depot. RT Train trip from L.A. or Fullerton $36 or $32 incl dinner, walking tour, mission admission. Pacific RR Society Inc, PO Box 2858, Riverside CA 92516. (714) 684-7458 afternoons.

Sep 23-25: Detroit-Mackinaw City MI RT, Detroit-Bay City on GTW OW; then via Detroit & Mackinac to Mackinaw City; total 612 rare miles; Saturday free. Mackinac Isl. package avail. Windsor Travel Consultants, 35970 Quakertown Ln, Farmington MI 48018.

One Rail Fantrips listing is free. Send info to: RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Fantrips Dept, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709. Send SASE when responding to listings.

LETTERS

(continued from page 2)

appear to be a GE composite, probably Lexan, rather than glass. Also, the dome contains only five rows of high-backed seats, which do recline slightly. Visibility is restricted.

Finally, NE Corridor track condition is, in places, still astonishingly poor. Turnouts are not properly aligned, track corrugation is present in many areas, and the ride is generally too rough to write, or set a coffee cup on a tray table. What did they do with that $2 billion?

Andrew Selden
Minneapolis, Minnesota

A lot of media time has been used to say "goodbye" to the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR, "the last real train." Quite frankly, I think all this ballyhoo has been overdone! If this is, indeed, "the last real train," why did I join NARP, and am I wasting my time writing my Congressmen to support continued Amtrak funding (some of my friends say "yes")?

The RGZ was a fine train, I'll admit, and it did have some of the ambiance not found on Amtrak today. However, it had two strikes against it: continuing operational losses, and no merger partner looking at D&RGW wanted to inherit another passenger train. It is to Rio Grande's credit that they held on as long as they did, and popularity had a lot to do with that. Rio Grande might have dumped the "last real train" sooner had it not been for Amtrak and the regulatory bodies.

I think this "last real train" stuff does Amtrak a disservice. If RGZ had been under "Uncle Sugar's" thumb from Day One, how much of that ambiance would we have enjoyed the last eleven years? Amtrak's CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR will offer something RGZ didn't, such as daily service, new equipment, no problems with connections at Salt Lake City and Denver. The ski and tourist market is still there if Amtrak Marketing will just "take the bull by the norns."

Orvis D. Scott
Gallup, New Mexico

(Don't look at us; we never called the RGZ the "last real train".--Ed.)

The Apr 24 timetables for the Chicago-New York train service show Amtrak's indifferent attitude towards train performance and scheduling.

The BROADWAY LIMITED leaves Chicago at 4:50pm and arrives in New York at 1:22pm. The LAKE SHORE LIMITED leaves Chicago at 6:20pm but gets into New York at 1:15pm--seven minutes sooner than the BROADWAY altho it departed Chicago 1½ hours later.

About 30 years ago the BROADWAY LIMITED ran from Chicago to New York in 15½ hours, compared to the present 19hrs, 38mins. It is no wonder that Amtrak is not gaining new customers.

Henry Korman
Longview, Washington

In RTN #263 I came upon a letter by William Viekman where he expresses enthusiasm for Amtrak's new "take on the airlines" marketing strategy. As a businessman--now retired--and an ardent train advocate, my heart says, yes, yes we CAN lure the numerous airline passengers back to the rails. Unfortunately, this immediate, almost emotional reaction must at some time contend with my rational mind--and my personal experience.

I recall with a mixture of guilt and sorrow when, in the late 1950s, I found myself flying more and more on business trips. Altho unthinkable to most RTN readers, try to see the rail/air choice from the average businessman's viewpoint --who after all is not a railfan and sees travel, with its strange cities, days away from family and friends, etc., as simply an unpleasant necessity.

Let's say a businessman has a late morning or lunch meeting in a distant city. If he takes the plane, he can enjoy a dinner at home, watch a favorite TV show, and sleep in how own wide, comfortable bed. Next morning he catches a 9:00am flight for his appointment. Likewise, he'll be home that same night on an afternoon plane. Using an overnight train, on the other hand, will likely mean going directly from the office to the station the evening before. The relaxing night at home is, of course, lost, and in place of that wide, deep-cushioned Beautyrest, he'll have to make do on a narrow, somewhat shallow mattress which seems all too inclined to shake, bounce and vibrate as the great Limited stops and starts and speeds thru curves and switches during the night. And completing one's "morning toilet" (to use a grand old Victorian term) is considerably more awkward and inconvenient in the train s confined quarters than at home. Of course, the fact that you could have been there in an hour or two and for half the fare (L.A. to San Francisco, for example, costs twice as much by sleeper as by air) does enter one's mind...

J. Newcomb
Napa, California